

Good Afternoon. Over the past couple of years, all of us have been preparing for our SACSCOC reaffirmation process. As you know, we had our off-site review last year and submitted our Focused Report. On March 14 – 16, 2017, the on-site committee visited campus. At that time, they praised the university for our commitment to student success, our collaborative spirit, our shared vision, the beauty of the campus, the dedication our faculty and staff have to their disciplines and the university as a whole, and made recommendations based on their observations and review. Most of the recommendations centered on Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.

As stated in my March 15 weekly update, much work has been done on our strategic plan over the past two years, and we have implemented an institutional effectiveness model which includes a variety of assessment processes. We have accelerated our timeline to meet the deadline for submitting our response to the on-site committee.

We received the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee report this week and received nine recommendations as expected. A recommendation is provided when the committee cannot determine, based on the information provided, if a standard is in compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. Below are the standards the University will address in order to provide a response to SACSCOC no later than August 16. I want to thank all of you who have worked on the report for the past couple of years. Please note that there is much work still to be done that will require participation from all of us. Please note recommendation #1 is a Core Requirement, meaning the University's accreditation status could be impacted if it is not found in compliance. Collaboratively, we will all work extremely hard to ensure that we are in compliance.

### **Core Requirement**

2.5 – Institution Effectiveness (related to the University's Strategic Plan)

### **Comprehensive Standards**

3.3 – Institutional Effectiveness (at the unit level)

3.3.1.1 – Student Learning Outcomes for academic degree programs

3.3.1.2 – Administrative Support Services

3.3.1.3 – Academic & Student Support Services

3.3.1.4 – Research

3.3.1.5 – Community/Public Service

3.5.1 – General Education Competencies

### **Quality Enhancement Plan: Learning for Life**

Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan.  
Assessment of the Plan

### **The Week:**

Monday was a banner day for us as we announced our new Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/amt-program-ready-for-fall-2017/>. Thanks to the leadership of Engineering Technology Department Head Dr. Ali Ahmad, we were able to collaborate with Central

Louisiana Technical Community College, Northwest Louisiana Technical College and area manufacturers to develop this work-based learning program.

Wednesday was University of Louisiana System Day at the State Capitol. Approximately 800 students, faculty, staff and ULS board members and staff converged on the Capitol grounds to advocate for Higher Education in the State of Louisiana, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/nsu-takes-part-in-uls-day-at-the-capitol/>. We spent the day visiting with the governor, representatives and senators to share with them our legislative priorities, which include:

- Budget Stability and Predictability for Higher Education - ULS has endured 18 cuts since 2008, a reduction of \$283M in state funding. No more cuts to higher education.
- Restore \$18M cut to Higher Education in House Bill 1 – loss of funding to ULS campuses if not restored \$5M plus.
- Restore \$81.8 M shortfall in TOPS.
- Pass HB 113 by Rep. Chris Broadwater - Removes sunset on Act 377, allowing all universities to increase fees with the approval of management boards. Filed at request of UL System.
- Pass SB 71 by Sen. Jack Donahue – corrects language from 2016 Session capping TOPS award to year in which TOPS was not fully funded. Without passage, TOPS would be permanently reduced, a loss of \$81 M. Filed at request of UL System. Duplicate bill: SB 157 by Senator Hewitt.
- Defeat HB 34 by Rep. Stephen “Steve” Pugh - Constitutional Amendment to abolish all management boards and create single board. States with one governing board have an average population of 1.9M, while Louisiana has a population of 4.7M.
- Louisiana must develop a predictable and stable budget, or more higher education cuts are on the horizon:

June 30, 2018 – \$1.4B in temporary revenue expires

FY 2019 – projected shortfall \$1.5B

FY 2020 – projected shortfall \$1.7B

FY 2021 – projected shortfall \$1.9B

- Louisiana ranks last among 16 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states in funding of public higher education. While other states are reinvesting in higher education, Louisiana is falling further behind.

Thursday was the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Northwestern State University Research Day. The day was highlighted by 42 oral presentations, two special music performances and 30 poster presentations. Among the oral and poster presentations were 2 from LSMSA, as well as 46 undergraduate and 3 graduate student projects, each mentored by at least one NSU faculty member. Congratulations and thanks to all faculty and students on their research and presentations.

In addition, I want to thank Dr. Rick Jensen on his keynote address, members of the Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran (chair), Matt DeFord, Dr. Mark Melder, Dr. Michelle Morris, Dr. Begona Perez-Mira and Dr. Shayne Rasmussen for hosting the event. It is also important to note that Information Technology Services and Student Technology were able to live stream presentations over WebEx for viewing by distance learning students.

Finally, congratulations to the recipients of the research awards:  
Paul Christopher – Mildred Hart Bailey Faculty Research Award  
Kirsten Fontenot – Phi Kappa Phi Student Research Award  
Jessica Cross – Student Design Award

### **My Week:**

Monday, several of us gathered in the Henderson Conference Room for the signing and announcement of our new Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program mentioned above. Students participating in the program will earn an associate degree of science in engineering technology with additional courses and a manufacturing certification through NWLTC-Natchitoches and CLTCC.

Tuesday morning, I joined our President's Leadership Program students as they hosted the Red River Special Olympics, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/plp-volunteers-host-red-river-special-olympics/>. Afterwards, the Strategic Planning Team met. Attached are the minutes of the meeting.

That afternoon, Ron Wright, Tracy Brown and I met with a group of IT specialists as they highlighted IT equipment and infrastructure for us to consider at NSU. Later in the day, I met with a faculty candidate for our open Physics faculty position. After the meetings, I drove to Baton Rouge.

As mentioned above, Wednesday was ULS Day at the State Capitol. At breakfast, I joined ULS President Dr. Jim Henderson and the other eight presidents from the University of Louisiana System schools for a meeting with Gov. John Bel Edwards. He emphasized that higher education continues to be a major priority of his in this legislative session but noted that there is certainly a lot of work ahead to address the fiscal challenges in our state. After breakfast, we moved over to the capitol where I gathered with over 170 Northwestern State University students, faculty and staff. We joined colleagues from the University of Louisiana Monroe, Louisiana Tech University, Grambling State University, McNeese State University, University of Louisiana Lafayette, Nicholls State University, University of New Orleans and Southeastern Louisiana University for a luncheon with legislators and rally on the capitol steps.

Later, I attended the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations where NSU SGA President John Pearce testified before the House committee. He did a phenomenal job of representing NSU and students across the state. After the committee meeting, the ULS Presidents presented our legislative priorities in meetings with House Education Committee Chair Rep. Nancy Landry and Senate Education Committee Chair Sen. Dan Morrish.

Following the individual meetings, we ended our day with recognition from the House and Senate in their respective chambers.

Thursday, I remained in Baton Rouge for the University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors meetings, <http://ulsystem.edu/index.cfm?md=newsroom&tmp=detail&articleID=777&catID=40>. We had several items approved by the board, including:

- approval of a proposal for a Post Baccalaureate Certificate program in Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- approval of a proposal for a Post Baccalaureate Certificate program in Invasive Cardiovascular Technology
- approval to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to NSU alumnus, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of CenturyLink Stewart Ewing
- approval to enter into and execute a Ground Lease Agreement with Christus Health Northern Louisiana for use of a parking lot adjacent to our College of Nursing and Allied Health Complex
- approval to enter into a Facilities Lease with the Demons Unlimited Foundation for a new scoreboard and facility upgrade to Turpin Stadium (this allows us to use private dollars for upgrades)
- approval to offer in-state tuition to students whose parents graduated from ANY regionally accredited college or university in Louisiana (previously we could only offer this if they had graduated from NSU)
- Personnel approvals
- Approval of our campus housing, meal plan and auxiliary rates for 2017 – 2018

Friday morning, I met with a candidate for a faculty position in Biology and then traveled to Dallas with Athletic Director Greg Burke, NSU Alumni and Foundation Director Drake Owens and Assistant Director Van Erikson. Friday evening, we visited with an enthusiastic group of approximately 100 NSU alumni at the home of NSU alumna Jill Morrison.

Saturday morning, I joined several faculty and staff at our Graduate and Transfer Advising Day at the Student Union. NSU Assistant Director of Recruiting Melanie McBride did a fantastic job organizing the transfer day. That afternoon, I attended DemonFest, an annual music and arts festival hosted by KNWD, our student-run radio station. I was also able to catch a few innings of our softball games vs Nicholls State and baseball game vs McNeese.

As always, please contact me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Fork ‘em Demons,

Chris